

# MAKING A PLACE FOR YOU

**T**he holiday season is upon us. By definition, the holiday season is the festive season from Thanksgiving to the New Year. According to online sources, it is a time of gift giving, family meetings, religious observance, rest, and suspension of regular work schedules. For Christians it is also a time to celebrate the birth of our Lord. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the holiday season can also be defined as a time of complete madness, anxiety, and stress! My prayer this season is that we will all be victorious over the spirit of this age and redeem the time, making the most of this holiday season. However, in order to do this, we will need to intentionally resist the temptation of being caught up in the rush of event planning, materialism, and living up to everyone's expectations. The only expectation we need to live up to is His expectation, and His expectation is easy and His burden is light (see Matthew 11:30).

The key to redeeming the time or taking advantage of every opportunity this holiday season is maintaining our priorities. If our priorities do not govern our time and choices over the next few weeks, we will certainly be caught up in the madness of the season. We will then miss out on the special *God moments* the Lord has planned for us: moments of rest, moments of refreshing, and moments with our families and those we love. The enemy wants to control these moments and keep us from experiencing God's blessings. We must intentionally focus our prayers to keep this from happening and redeem our time from the enemy.

...“love, joy, peace,  
patience, kindness,  
goodness, faithful-  
ness, gentleness, and  
self-control”...

This holiday season, I strongly believe the Lord wants to bless our families and homes. The family is the divinely created structure ordained of God to experience the most valuable treasures of the Lord. This is why the devil attacks our homes so viciously. He comes “only to steal, kill, and destroy” (John 10:10). Satan wants our homes to be places of conflict, stress, yelling, screaming, and chaos. The Lord wants our homes to be a safe environment: a sanctuary of righteousness, peace, and joy (see Romans 14:7), a place where *kingdom love* can be shared and enjoyed by all, and a place of blessing and healing from the storms of life.

As the spiritual leader of my home, I know that the most important battle I must win is the battle for the spiritual environment of my home. To win this battle, parents must role model godly priorities: prayer, church attendance, and serving God. They must also mature to the place where they are consistently exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5: 22-23, *New Living Translation*). If parents do this, they will shut the doors to Satan, and the home will become a place of peace and blessing. The home will be filled with the presence of God and able to receive the blessings of God.

Pastor's article to be continued on page 2...

*Pastor's article continues...*

Another key to maintaining a healthy, spiritual environment in our homes is appropriately managing all media sources. Parents must set appropriate boundaries for media and role model the same. It is so easy to spend hours entertaining ourselves with media, but it robs us of precious moments with the Lord, family, and friends. Media is the enemy of *redeeming the time!* We will never win the battle for our homes and experience the fullness of God's blessings in our homes if we are slaves to media.

Lastly, but certainly not least in importance, is prayer. It is always in season to pray. Prayer is the means to making the most of this holiday season. Don't give up on prayer! Prayer opens the door to God's blessings in our lives. Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). So keep asking, keep knocking and the Lord of Glory will come in and do marvelous things this holiday season!

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Brian Jones.

## Imagine Update

*by Pastor Jones*

“Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good” (Genesis 1:3-4, *New Living Translation*). I am quite amazed at how excited we are over some asphalt and lights. Of course, we know it is much more than that; it is the vision becoming a reality! We are seeing the fruit of our labor: the result of much planning, sacrificial giving, and, of course, divine intervention. We are caught up in the vision. We have a purpose. We are making a place for others! We believe the Lord is sending revival. We believe that the Lord has chosen us to build a house for the sanctuary, so we must be strong, and do the work (See I Chronicles 28:10). We must prepare for revival and the harvest of souls.

There is no doubt that there's something significant about our new lighting. I don't want to over-spiritualize something, but I believe there is something happening in the Spirit that can be compared to our lighting. Our old outside lighting was limited by the powers of authority in our community (Ann Arbor Township), and the lights were dim and obscure at best. Now we have permission for abundant light, illuminating the way for all to see! I do

believe the Lord is telling us that He is increasing our light in the community. Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matthew 5:14). Surely the Lord is increasing our light so that our church is not hidden from the lost. Satan wants this Apostolic truth under a bushel, but the Lord wants our light out of obscurity for all to see! Light is so inviting and warm, and it comforts us, making us feel secure. I believe our new parking lot and lighting is an invitation to our community that is boldly declaring, *Come and see, something is happening here!*

I personally want to thank everyone for faithfully keeping their commitments. Because of you, that which we have only *imagined* is becoming a reality. With the Lord's help, we will begin construction of the building in 2017. Please continue to give sacrificially. Please continue to volunteer your time and talents to the Lord. Resist the temptation Satan is whispering in your ear that you are doing enough. This is the voice of the enemy. Resist it and volunteer your time and talents. Give your best to the Lord. Make it a family event and get everyone involved. You will never outgive Him!

## Upcoming Events

12.03 - Christmas Decorating Day

12.18 - Christmas for Christ Service

12.10 - Ladies' Shopping Trip to Frankenmuth and Birch Run

12.23 - Christmas Recital

12.17 - Men's Breakfast

# Keys to a Healthy Marriage

by Bro. & Sis. Gardner

**A** strong marriage is the foundation for any strong family. It's not one sided or all about one's own needs. There should be a balance and conscious effort to work together toward solutions. In our 21 years of marriage, Sister Gardner and I have learned some principles which serve the marriage relationship. Here are a few we feel helped us over the years:

- Be Christians together and apart.
- Pray together.
- Read God's Word together.
- Fast together.
- Go to church together.
- Honor Her - don't treat her like a doormat and expect her to be interested in you.
- Respect Him - don't disrespect him and expect him to be interested in you.
- The grass is not greener on the other side. Stop comparing or critiquing your spouse to the point that you cannot enjoy your relationship.
- Don't let the sun go down without saying I'm sorry and forgiving each other (my wife and I have done this faithfully for 21 years and I can honestly tell you we have rarely broken our commitment to do this).
- Recognize when your marriage is under attack and join together in prayer, fasting, and the Word to get the victory.
- Don't let other couples set the tone for your marriage. God gave you each other for a reason and wants you to enjoy the life you have together. It's okay to learn from others.
- Make memories together (laugh, go on dates, be close, hold hands, family vacations, weekend get-aways, etc.).
- Have children - they surely make life interesting! You also realize a lot about each other, yourself, and God through watching your kids grow and reflect back your image!
- Have time to be alone - It's ok to take the time to be alone for an hour or so. Talk with your spouse and see what you can work out to give each other some alone time. You can take that time to work on a hobby, read a book, meditate on the Word, etc.

- My wife and I do not post personal issues and, in this context, any marital disagreements or dislikes in a public place like Facebook or any other forum or media.
- Watch for warning signs in your marriage. Be sensitive to your spouse's feelings whether verbal or non-verbal. If you feel things are not right, pray together and ask the Lord for wisdom.
- Guard your home. What you watch or listen to will either bring the presence of God in or allow spiritual attacks.
- Don't hold the past over your spouse's head. Forgive and love. When the past comes up to your present, just remind each other that it's forgiven, your love you have for each other never fails, and love conquers all.
- Listen, listen, listen. Don't tune them out. You may miss some very important information!
- Take time to notice your spouse again.
- Compliment your spouse to them personally and, when appropriate, in public.
- Don't bash your spouse. Ever!
- Hold hands - be affectionate!
- Refuse to speak negatively about your marriage.
- Speak life into your marriage.
- Look for ways to speak their love language (read the book about love languages).
- Memorize I Corinthians 13.
- Tomorrow doesn't have to be like yesterday - choose to be happy!
- Be honest with each other - lies never help a marriage.
- Don't be selfish - think about your spouse more than yourself.
- Don't be a workaholic - come home - enjoy each other.
- Don't forsake family time - no matter what!
- Don't bring frustrations of work home and take it out on your spouse or kids - take time to decompress.
- Your home should be the happiest and most peaceful place to be - if not - it's time to pray!
- Don't forget: marriage isn't a life jail sentence; it's supposed to be enjoyable. Live each day in that blessing and enjoy each other until death do you part.
- Above all: put God first and in the center of all you do!



# Train Up A Child

by Bro. & Sis. Turner

**R**ev. Aaron Bounds, pastor of The Anchor Church in Zanesville, Ohio, made a statement while he was preaching at General Conference this year that has stuck with us. The gist of what he said is that we are instructed to *train* up a child in the way he should go, not *raise* up a child. We raise chickens; we train children. While some might accuse him of arguing semantics, we believe he has uncovered a subtle dichotomy of paradigms as it relates to the upbringing of our children.

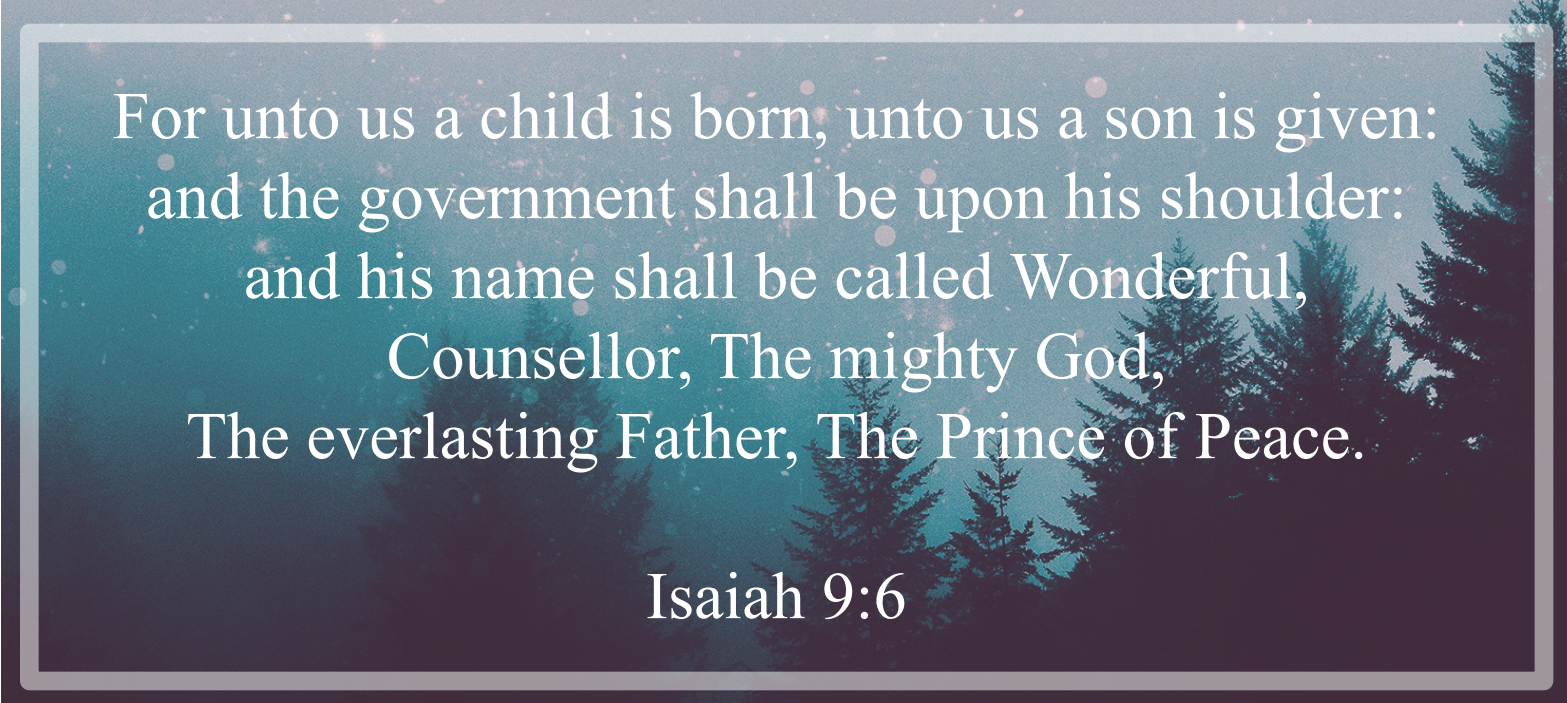
One definition of *raise* offered by Webster's Dictionary is to *bring to maturity*. While this is admirable, it is the rest of the definitions which give us pause. Definitions such as *to lift up* and *to place higher in rank or dignity* outnumber the former definition. We see this parenting philosophy manifest itself too often. We, as an every-kid-gets-a-trophy society, have placed an emphasis on building up self-esteem and giving our kids whatever they want and have neglected our biggest responsibility – to *train* up our children. With this approach to parenting, we produce undisciplined, entitled children who lack character and integrity.

Webster's definition of *train* is subtly different, but its application has the ability to produce a vastly different outcome. Webster's primary definitions are: *to direct the growth... usually by bending, pruning, and tying; to form by instruction, discipline; to teach so as to make fit, qualified; and to make prepared.*

To us, these definitions evoke images of shaping, forming, and molding, much as a master potter or gardener would apply their skill to a vessel or tree. Everything done is intentional, with the goal being to shape the recipient for its own good, so as to one day be fit, able to fulfill its intended purpose.

This is much more closely aligned to the biblical term to *train up* a child. The Hebrew word translated *train up* means to narrow, to discipline, even to strangle. Now, we understand there may be times that you'd like to strangle your child, but we advise against that. What Scripture is trying to help us understand is that parents are the primary molders and shapers of our children's lives. Our job is to set boundaries and enforce them, even in the face of accusations that we're being restrictive and constraining. We set bed times and limits on media and entertainment, we feed them healthy food even as they plead for candy and soda, we don't protect from the consequences of their choices, and we prioritize church over worldly pursuits. We could go on, but you probably get the point. This biblical approach to parenting will prepare our children for the place God has for them in His Kingdom. Only by training up our children will they be fit for the Master's use. We don't claim to be perfect, but this is the standard for which we strive.

Our precious children are not chickens, so let's not treat them as such.



For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
and his name shall be called Wonderful,  
Counsellor, The mighty God,  
The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6